



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jury Convicts 6 St. Thomas Men of Drug Conspiracy Charges

St. Thomas, USVI – After a six-day trial, a federal jury on St. Thomas on May 31, 2010, convicted Dorian Swan, Vernon Fagan, Kelvin Moses, Kerry Woods, Craig Claxton, and Walter Ells of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine, United States Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe, Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent-in-Charge Javier F. Pena, and Virgin Islands Police Commissioner Novelle Francis announced today.

The six St. Thomas men were all convicted of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute over five kilograms of cocaine. Ells was also convicted of one count of conspiracy to import over five kilograms of cocaine into the United States. They all face a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison, a maximum sentence of life in prison, and a maximum fine of \$4,000,000 on the conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute charge. The penalty is the same for the conspiracy to import cocaine charge. All of the defendants, with the exception of Ells, were immediately remanded to the Bureau of Prisons. Ells remains free on a property bond pending sentencing. Sentencing is set for September 8, 2010.

Evidence presented at trial established that the defendants were part of a drug conspiracy which involved the international smuggling of hundreds of kilograms of cocaine from Venezuela through the

British Virgin Islands and into the United States by use of commercial airlines. This organization, referred to as “The Island Boys”, had been operating in concert with Venezuelan and Colombian cartels since the mid 1990’s. It airdropped approximately 800 kilograms of cocaine every two weeks off the coast of Tortola, BVI. The bales of cocaine were then transported by vessel to a private dock in Tortola where they remained until they were transported to St. Thomas, USVI. Once the cocaine reached St. Thomas, the defendants used couriers to smuggle the cocaine through the Cyril E. King Airport for distribution in various states on the U.S. mainland.

This case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration and Virgin Islands Police Department. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Delia L. Smith, Nolan D. Paige and Kim R. Lindquist.